



PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

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Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

Working in partnership
with the citizens of
Henrico County to create
the conditions for health.



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Communicable Diseases

Shigella/Norovirus: Public health officials have noted a general increase in the number of *Shigella* cases in central Virginia, including Henrico County. We are also aware of norovirus outbreaks in the region. Those most likely to spread *Shigella* include daycare staff and attendees, food handlers and persons providing direct patient care in hospitals, nursing homes or other institutions. Stool testing of patients presenting with the typical clinical picture will aid in the identification of persons in high risk groups and decrease the opportunity for additional transmission in these settings. **We are recommending that workers or students in high risk settings testing positive for *Shigella* remain out of these settings until they are asymptomatic for 24 hours and are proven culture negative.** If you have a patient who is a food handler, please remind them that the Virginia Food Regulations ([12 VAC 5-421-110](#)) requires them to report such illnesses to their managers. **Seasonal Influenza: Surveillance** -Virginia 2008/2009 Influenza Surveillance Activity Level: [No Activity](#) (As of 10/25/2008). **Influenza Reporting** – Please report lab confirmed cases of influenza to the health department weekly on an Epi-1 form (fax 501-4232) as number of cases only. **Sharing Immunization Information:** School health officials asked that we remind you that sharing immunization information with other health providers including school health nurses is allowed under Virginia code. [§ 32.1-46E](#).

Community Health Improvement

Saving Babies in Henrico: A town hall meeting to introduce the “Community Voice” program [to prevent infant mortality using lay health advisers] will take place on **November 6, 2008** at **New Bridge Baptist Church** (5807 Nine Mile Rd, Richmond) from 6-8 PM. Please suggest the program to potential advisers. RSVP to Mary Church at 501-4649. **Preterm birth:** According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the percentage of total preterm (< 37 weeks gestation) deliveries has risen 20% from 1990-2005. Late preterm births (34-36 weeks) have increased 25% during the same time period and in Henrico represent ~71% of all preterm births (See chart). Local practitioners should continue efforts to actively decrease late preterm births to impact mortality and morbidity in Henrico.

Gestational age of fetus

(Among preterm infants, Henrico County, 2006-2007)

Gestational Age	n	%
< 28 weeks	77	8.4
28-31 weeks	79	8.6
32-33 weeks	109	11.8
34-36 weeks	655	71.2
Total	920	100.0

[Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE WHO: 3; US: 0](#)

Emergency Preparedness

Pandemic Flu I/Q Exercise: Henrico County Health Department recently exercised a pandemic flu isolation and quarantine scenario with local partners. Critical operational feedback was obtained. An After Action Report (AAR) will be available in the near future and we plan to distribute the lessons learned.

Medical Reserve Corps: The latest Henrico MRC newsletter can be found at: www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.html

Environmental Health

West Nile Virus Testing: False-positive test results obtained with a West Nile virus immunoglobulin M capture enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (manufactured by Inverness Medical) that occurred between July and September 2008 may have led to an incorrect diagnosis in some patients. If the patient is still experiencing symptoms, additional evaluation and alternative diagnoses should be considered. The health department can help healthcare providers decide if a new serum specimen should be obtained to test for WNV or another etiology.

Rabies Vaccine Update: Novartis wholesale distributors may now be able to fill pre-exposure requests for workers in high risk categories. Please contact the local health department if you have an appropriate candidate for the vaccine. Rabies pre-exposure vaccine is NOT available from Sanofi Pasteur and probably will not be for the foreseeable future. Rabies pre-exposure vaccine is still not available for foreign travelers.

Prevention Updates

The USPSTF recommends: 1) interventions during pregnancy and after birth to promote and support breastfeeding ([B recommendation](#)), 2) that adults age 50 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer using annual high-sensitivity fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy every five years with fecal occult testing between exams, or colonoscopy every 10 years ([A recommendation](#)), 3) high-intensity behavioral counseling to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) for all sexually active adolescents and for adults at increased risk for STIs ([B recommendation](#)). See: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/prevenix.htm>

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